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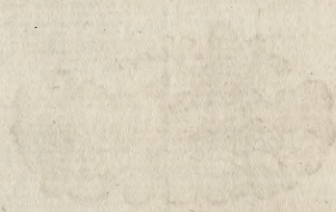
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Ulrich Middeldorf

Weston Helgar

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Two other things are mentioned in the text which are of great importance. The first is the fact that the text is written in a very old hand, and the second is the fact that the text is written in a very old hand.



A
V I E W
OF THE
CUSTOMS, MANNERS, DRAMA, &c.
OF
I T A L Y,
AS THEY ARE DESCRIBED IN
THE FRUSTA LETTERARIA;

AND IN
The Account of ITALY in English,
Written by Mr. BARETTI;
COMPARED WITH
The LETTERS from ITALY,
Written by Mr. SHARP.

By SAMUEL SHARP, Esq;

L O N D O N :

Printed for W. NICOLL, No. 51, in St. Paul's Church-Yard,
M DCC LXVIII.

[Price One Shilling and Six-pence.]

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Translated by MR. BARETT.

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WRITTEN BY MR. BARETT.

BY SAMUEL SHARP.

LONDON:

Printed by W. BARNES, No. 41, St. Paul's Church-yard.

MDCCLXXXI.

[The end of the world.]

ADVERTISEMENT.

MR. Sharp had nearly finished this Pamphlet, before he intended to prefix his Name to it, which may serve as an Apology, if an Apology be necessary, for its being written in the third Person.

Mr. Sharp has not scrupled to ascribe the *Frustra Letteraria* to Mr. Baretti, having seen several Gentlemen who have heard him speak of himself as the Author.

ADVERTISEMENT

Mr. R. Chip has nearly finished
his book, which he in-
tended to publish the first of the year, which
may serve as an appendix to his former
work, he is necessary for the being written
in the third person.

Mr. Chip has not stopped to describe
the whole of his work to Mr. B. but
having seen several gentlemen who
have heard him speak of himself as the

Author

A
V I E W
OF THE
CUSTOMS, MANNERS, DRAMA, &c.
OF
I T A L Y.

IN the years 1763, 64, and 65, Mr. Baretti carried on at Venice, an anonymous periodical work, called the *Frusfa Letteraria*, (or Literary Scourge) not unlike our Critical Review, in which he has not only passed his judgment on a variety of books published in Italy ; but also from time to time has occasionally given us a picture of the manners of Italy in that period. As Mr. Baretti is an Italian by birth, and lived at that juncture, in the midst of his countrymen, we must suppose him labouring under all the honest prejudices, in favour of his native country, to which the wisest men are subject ; so that possibly some allowance should be made for the flattery of his pencil ; but of this the reader will judge by and by.

B

Mr.

Mr. Baretti in the English account has thrown out several animadversions on Mr. Sharp's Letters from Italy; and indeed they seem to have given birth to that work. My principal design therefore in this pamphlet, is to examine the opinions advanced in those letters, of which the *Frustra Letteraria* will be no improper criterion, as it will be imagined that Mr. Baretti, when he gave the publick his thoughts on the Learning, Drama, Poetry, and Manners of his native country, spoke the dictates of his heart, and to the best of his judgment, the truth, without fallacy or disguise.

I do not think it a matter of any consequence, whether Mr. Sharp was dreaming, drunk, or mad, when he wrote those Letters, or even whether it was not he himself, but his footman, who was the author of them; all which facts are asserted by Mr. Baretti. My inquiry shall be into the truth of the relations, which are published under the name of Mr. Sharp, and I shall be cautious in calling upon any other authority, than the writings of Mr. Baretti himself.

The charge of omission is very severe against Mr. Sharp. He is upbraided with some bitterness,

ness, for having wilfully neglected to speak of the literature of Italy, from an aversion to do justice and honour to its learned men. I will not take upon me to be responsible for Mr. Sharp's silence on that head ; perhaps he did not presume to touch upon so delicate a subject, being conscious that to be master of it requires both time and science ; perhaps he had formed a disadvantageous judgement of the present state of learning in Italy, and was too diffident of his abilities, to publish that judgement ; or, lastly, perhaps, he had conceived a favourable opinion of it, but meeting with Mr. Baretti's *Frustra Letteraria*, where the several articles of literature are so differently treated, he might drop his pen, and submit his ideas, to those of so good a critic as Mr. Baretti.—To give therefore a farther insight into the present state of literature in Italy, than what is to be obtained from any other writings, I shall in the course of this paper, offer Mr. Baretti's thoughts on this subject, as they appear in his *Frustra Letteraria* ; but first, I shall extract from his English account, in as concise a manner as I am able, his present opinion on this article.

In his 13th chapter he asks, “ to what end did Mr. Sharp give an account of his travels

through Italy, if he did not visit our several universities, and enter our numerous libraries? What judgement would posterity form of Italy from an account given by him, who had no personal acquaintance with any one of the many men of learning that live at present amongst us?" In other parts of this chapter, he compares the present age with the illustrious age of Leo 10th; and says, that when he considers the wonderful progress, that all sciences have made all over Europe, within these three last centuries, he is almost tempted to think, that exclusive of the knowledge of learned languages, the real knowledge of the present English women alone, were it possible to bring it all together, would prove not much inferior to the real knowledge of that illustrious age, with which shallow satirists, and peevish poets, of all countries, reproach the degeneracy of their own.—After this panegyrick on the English ladies, which possibly may offend the Italian ladies as a satire on them, Mr. Baretti proceeds to give us a long catalogue of libraries and learned men now in Italy, and affirms that in all their universities every kind of literature is much cultivated, and that every one of them can boast of some eminent professor.

In

In chapter the 14th, he treats at length on the education of physicians and surgeons, with great encomiums on their practice, which he extends even to the practitioners of small towns and villages. In this chapter he also describes the manner in which students in divinity and students in law, are qualified for the church and the bar ; and here he takes occasion to join with Mr. Sharp in condemning the noisy method of pleading at Venice :—His words are ;—Mr. Sharp in the very beginning of his work, sets out, foppishly enough, for a deep critick in the Venetian dialect, and speaks of the advocates of Venice ; yet he does not venture to give his opinion with regard to their powers in oratory. He only describes them in their acts of peroration, and is very right when he says, that their voices are discord, their gesticulations approaching to those of madmen, and their general way of pleading, noisy and uncivilized.”——I cannot dismiss this paragraph, without observing, how unkindly Mr. Baretti has perverted the sense of Mr. Sharp’s remark on the inability of many Venetians, to pronounce the letter G, &c. representing him as having coined the Venetian words, Dudice, Dulio, &c ; whereas Mr.

Sharp only asserts, that through this inability, the Venetians pronounce the words Giudice, Giulio, &c. as if they were written Dudice, Dulio, &c. (p. 5.) I beg pardon for this digression ; but to render the comparative view of these two writers clear and distinct, it may be necessary, now and then, to adjust a misrepresentation, when it occurs ; that we may form a true judgment of their different opinions.

Mr. Baretti, in his eulogium on the learned men of Italy, laments however, the discouragements under which learning lies, and ascribes its present vigour, to the ambition and curiosity of its admirers. He says, that learning cannot procure in our days, that veneration to its possessors from all classes of people, and especially from princes and great lords, which it procured to them soon after its restoration ; that a cardinal's hat is not now to be grasped at by climbing up the ladders of Greek and Latin ; that they have no King of Prussia for a patron and panegyrist, who will deign to take the trouble of gilding all Voltaire's silver, and all Algarotti's copper ; that the trade of writing books is by no means a profitable trade ; that not one writer in a hundred, ever got with his quill as much in a twelvemonth, as the worst hackney scribler

scribler in London can get in a week ; that the impossibility of making money by their literary labours, is not the only disadvantage that attends the learned of Italy ; they are likewise to encounter many difficulties in the publication of their works. Nothing is printed in Italy without being first licensed by two, and sometimes more revisers, appointed by the civil and ecclesiastical government. These are to peruse every manuscript intended for the press ; and sometimes their scrupulousness and timidity, sometimes their vanity or ill temper, and sometimes their ignorance and insufficiency, raise so many objections, that a poor author is often made quite sick with his own productions. Yet he says, that long use has reconciled the Italians to this custom ; and that in the present state of things, slavery is preferable to liberty. Had Mr. Sharp drawn the Italians in the black colours here exhibited by Mr. Baretti, he might reasonably have incurred the indignation, not only of Italians, but of every man who has any sense of the blessings of liberty. Were our press to be set free, says Mr. Baretti, sedition, defamation, profaneness, ribaldry, and other such benefits, would then quickly circulate through all our towns, villages, and hamlets. Irreli-

gion would be substituted in a great measure to bigotry and superstition ; the Pope would be called antichrist, and mother church a whore ; such would be, amongst others, the blessed effect of a free press in Italy, could we ever be indulged with it. But Heaven avert we should ! It is said that no body knows the pleasures of madness but madmen. The same may be justly said of the peculiar advantages of slavery ; they are not to be conceived but by slaves. And if it be true, that learning cannot flourish, but in the sunshine of liberty ; and if it be impossible, without a freedom of the press, ever to have in Italy such writers as the Johnsons and Warburtons of England, let Italy never have any, as long as their Alps and Apennines will stand ; provided that on the other hand she never be ornamented by — Cætera desunt.

I shall not descant on this account of the general state of learning in Italy, which seems on the one hand, to be represented as in the most flourishing situation ; and on the other, as labouring under almost insurmountable difficulties ; but shall proceed to the positive judgment that Mr. Baretti has passed on this subject in his *Frusta Letteraria*,

FRUSTA LETTERARIA.

Page 290. Mr. Baretti asserts, that in point of learning the Italians are as far below the French, as the people of Morocco are below the Italians.

P. 191. That amongst the modern Tuscans, Cocchi alone writes a perfectly good prose—all the others, are totally ignorant of a good stile. Count Gasparo Gozzi of Venice, however, approaches towards his manner, as does also a young professor at Padua, whose name I do not mention, because he has never printed any book.—All the Romans and Neapolitans write badly; I mean with regard to stile.—In Piedmont and in Lombardy, I do not know any author who writes distinguishably well.—This account perhaps (says Mr. Baretti) does no great honour to my dear country; but shall I tell lies to do honour to my dear country?

P. 329. He affirms that 'till within these two or three years, for half a century past, sonnets, eclogues, love stanzas, &c. have infected all Italy; and that this poetical pestilence has, during that period, committed the most cruel
devast-

devastation on logic, good taste and common sense.

P. 381. That amongst the innumerable false opinions which are adopted in wise Italy, for true ones, that which Italians form in regard to their language, is not the least false; as they suppose without scruple, that it is superior, in beauty, to all the living languages; and that it even equals those of Greece and ancient Rome; but that he shall shew them, with clear evidence, the falsity of this notion, and prove to them, that their language is not equal, much less superior, to the living languages of France and England.

P. 168. That in Italy there are, at this time, more writers than readers; but that there are only three authors generally read; one a good writer, Metastasio; the other two, Goldoni and Chiari, bad writers.

P. 253. That however Italy may not be so totally destitute of accomplished ladies, as some women-haters would make us believe; nevertheless we must, to our shame, confess, that our ladies are not generally educated with the same attention, as in other parts of Europe. In France, Germany, and even in Denmark
and

and Sweden, it is as easy to find many women perfectly well educated, and consequently knowing and amiable, as in this our peninsula, to meet with foolish and ill behaved women; nevertheless the blame of this disgraceful difference betwixt *all* our ladies, and *all* the ladies of those countries, is not to be imputed entirely to our fathers and mothers, though they scandalously neglect this their principal duty, but in great part to the writers in Italy, who have not yet been able to supply their country with proper books for finishing a woman's education.

P. 311. Mr. Baretti treating of *L' Osservatore Veneto*, written in imitation of the English Spectators, by the Count Gasparo Gozzi, speaks highly of that performance, and says, that would every body, men and women, read Gozzi, in Italy, as all ranks of people have read the Spectators in England, he should expect the same benefits from it; but that he cannot flatter himself with the hopes of seeing his dear countrymen do so good a thing; because that his dear countrymen universally do not love to read books which are calculated to improve them.

P. 9. Speaking favourably of a book entitled, *Della Preservazione della salute de Letterati*, he says, that in certain countries, every woman just above the vulgar would have read it; but that in Italy, he would bet one of his teeth, that no woman has opened it. It is enough in Italy, that a book have a learned title, to prevent it from being universally read; whereas on the contrary, in England, and in Holland, ay in frozen Denmark and Sweden, nay in the frightful country of Norway, and even in horrible Finland, the habitation of the cold North wind——

Vol. 2. p. 7. He says, that on the first appearance of the *Frustra Letteraria*, it was judged a useful and necessary work, in a country like theirs, over-run on every side with foolish literature and indecent manners.—

Vol. 1. p. 11. Mr. Baretti, censuring two certain publications, says however, that thanks to the great ignorance of the great number of his countrymen, they were universally read for some time.

P. 237. Do not call upon me to prove that dullness is the principal and universal characteristic of our modern writers, since it is a fact so apparent, and consequently so easy to prove,
that

that I know nothing more easy of demonstration.

P. 393. Amongst other languages which Mr. Baretti recommends to the study of the Italians, he particularly specifies English, in which many, very many excellent books are written, that they have never heard of; would they translate some of these into Italian, they would, says he, extend the limits of their present knowledge, and they would act much more laudably, than to be for ever flattering this or that great Lord, in hopes of a dinner or a few ducats.

P. 316. Mr. Baretti affirms, that the practice of surgery, all over Italy, abounds with a multiplicity of remedies; is filthy, stinking, and pompous; because the practitioners are ignorant of what is simple and true; and that the physicians of Italy would spare many lives, or as he expresses it, commit fewer homicides, if they would render their practice more simple.

A SOLILOQUY of MR. BARETTI.

P. 317. What! said I often to myself, is this noble country then a privy, where every dirty fellow has a right to drop the excrements
of

of his brain? Is it possible that no means should have been found, to prevent this nastiness in our literature; or at least, to cure some of these bare breeched rascals of their diarrhæa?

Vol. 2. p. 57. In a chapter to which he has given the title of *the glories of the age of darkness*, he says, If in future times, any learned men shall compile the insipid literary history of modern Italy, I beg my name may not be mentioned amongst those of my countrymen; and my ghost will be much obliged to them, if they will inform their cotemporaries, that I never spoke of the age I lived in, but under the title of Tenebroso; and a few lines lower, he calls it an age, with respect to Italy, dark, very dark—Tenebroso, Tenebrosissimo.—I shall make no comment on these bold strokes, and seeming caricatures; but the reader, I suppose, will, after this representation, forbear to censure Mr. Sharp's total silence on the state of learning in Italy; as it is natural to believe, that however wide his opinions may have been from those advanced in the *Frustra Letteraria*, by Mr. Baretti, yet he could hardly dare to oppose the judgment of a man, who was a critic by profession, and who being an Italian,

was so much better qualified than he could be, to write on so difficult a subject.

Mr. Baretti, in the 15th chapter of the English account, finishes the article of literature, with a description of the several academies now subsisting, or that have subsisted in Italy. The academy of the Crusca, stands the foremost in rank, and was instituted at Florence in the 16th century, for the purpose of ascertaining the Italian language, which undertaking it accomplished, with great honour to the members: at present it is declining, because all that could be said upon the subject, has been said over and over.

Next to the academy Della Crusca, that of the Arcadia Romana rose in repute. The business of the Arcadia Romana was to correct, increase, and beautify our poetry; as that of the Crusca, to purify, illustrate and fix our language. The members of this society, assumed the characters of shepherds, and it is one of the fundamental laws, that no person shall be admitted a member, without first taking upon him a pastoral name.—The fame of this academy soon spread all over Italy, and fifty-eight towns resolved on a sudden, to have like academies of their own, which they unanimously

mously called colonies of the Roman Arcadia. Mr. Baretti, however, concludes this account with informing us, that the Arcadian colonies are at last nearly annihilated throughout Italy; and the Arcadia Romana consists now only of a few Abatinos; but they still chuse a chief herdsman, whose most important business, is to make a penny of his place, and this he chiefly effects by sending Arcadian patents to the English travellers on their arrival at Rome.

I shall now give the reader an extract from the *Frustra Letteraria*, on these two academies; and I am much mistaken, if he will not find both profit and pleasure, from what Mr. Baretti has advanced in his strictures on the dictionary of the Crusca.

FRUSTA LETTERARIA.

P. 381. Though the Vocabulary of the Crusca, contain four thousand more words, than either Johnson's Dictionary, or that of the French Academy; yet one third of them are not used, either in writing, or in conversation; whereas both the English, and French, adopt in a manner every word in their dictionaries.

tionaries. Mr. Baretto thinks it would be of utility to the publick, were the vocabulary purged of the various kinds of obsolete, and certain obscene words with which it abounds. He laments that the antient and present members of the academy, being mostly Florentines, have always prescribed to authors, the use of the Tuscan language. He says that in France, the language of books is the same through the whole kingdom; and that in England, the same rule is observed; but that in Italy, authors are constrained to study the dialect of a particular country, which would not have been the case, had the vocabulary of the Crusca, been a universal, and not a provincial vocabulary. Another objection to their vocabulary, is their choice of words from infamous and vulgar writers; whereas in England, the models of the language are the writings of Clarendon, Temple, Swift, &c. and in France, the Corneilles, the Racines, the Molières, are their models, all venerable names;—and, says he, shall we Italians number amongst the authors of our language, a croud of scribes, barbers, coopers, carpenters, and such like rabble? Can a language written in the times of barbarism, when we knew neither science nor criticism,

cism, stand in any competition with the languages written by Bossuet and Tillotson? What ample dictionaries would those of England and France be, if the French still registered the words used by Amist, Rabelais, Commines; and the English preserved those of Gower, Chaucer and Caxton? He finishes this critique on the Italian vocabulary, with an observation on Boccace, which as I esteem it equally curious with all the opinions advanced under this article, I shall beg leave to lay before the reader.—

“ Boccace had wit, a lively imagination, eloquence, and all the other endowments necessary to form a good writer; nevertheless Boccace has been the ruin of the Italian tongue, and the chief cause that Italy does not yet possess a good and universal language; because these writers who first succeeded him, and afterwards the academists of the Crusca, delighted with his writings, the best they had yet seen, and charmed more than they should have been with the wantonness of his pen, they went on from year to year, and from age to age, celebrating him so much, that at length the universal opinion, or rather the universal error, was established; that in point of language and style,

style, Boccace was absolutely without a fault ; and consequently that whoever would write well in Italian, ought to write as Boccace had written.—But how can it be believed, that a man who lived in an age nearly barbarous, could perfect the language of our country ? that a servile imitator of the transposed phrases of the Latin, a dead language, could be the original of his own, a living one ? Nevertheless such was the respect paid to his works, that for the space of two hundred years, hardly any writer presumed to adopt a word not consecrated in them. This is the reason why our written language still retains the Latin character, and that people in general cannot be pleased with the writings of Boccace, nor his followers : whilst in England and in France, where they fortunately had no Boccace, nor disciples of Boccace, there have been formed two written languages, equally intelligible to the highest and the lowest orders of men.”

ARCADIA ROMANA.

Page 1st. Mr. Baretti opens his account of a book entitled Historical Memoirs of the assembly of the Arcadians, in the following manner :

Those admirers of unprofitable knowledge, who not being able to spend their time to advantage, employ it in learning trifles, and are desirous of being informed of that most celebrated literary puerility, called Arcadia, let them read this book. The author has written it with that feebleness of stile, and that humble spirit of adulation, which principally characterises the Arcadians. In the first chapter we have the names of the first fourteen founders of the Arcadian institution, eleven of which, says Mr. Baretti, are buried in oblivion, and the remaining three, Gravina, Crescembini, and Zappi, have their defects. Gravina understood Latin and juris-prudence ; but unhappily, in spite of Nature, he would be a poet, when she meant him to be an advocate. Crescembini was a man whose fancy was compounded partly of wood, and partly of lead ; but he foretells that Zappi, the amorous, the gallant, the

the sugary Zappi, will continue to be read by all young noble ladies, a month before, and a month after marriage, and that he will float on the surface of Lethe, without sinking, so long as the taste of effeminate (Eunuca) poetry shall subsist in Italy.

The second chapter, he says, tires us with the laws of Arcadia, which are written in imitation of those of antient Rome ; but are as unlike them, as an ape is to a doctor of the Sorbonne, or (as he expresses it in page 54 of the 2d vol.) as the statue of Harlequin, to the real person of Julius Cæsar.

The utter contempt with which he treats this society in his remarks on the two first chapters, renders it needless to give any farther proofs of the low estimation in which he holds it.

Mr. Baretti, in the 15th chapter of the English account, says, that besides the poor remains of the Crusca and the Arcadia, there are in Rome, and in other towns, other academies composed of people who pretend to ingenuity in one thing or other. At Rome, the academy of St. Luke have chosen St. Luke for their patron ; and he tells us, that the searchers into antient records, pretend, that in the 12th century there lived

one Mastro Luca, whose christian name was Santo, and that this man carved the famous Madonas of Loretto, Bologna, &c. whence arose the vulgar notion that those Madonas were painted by St. Luke : However, Mr. Baretti speaks with some diffidence of this scrap of erudition, and admits that the famous *Neustra Sennora del Pillar* actually worshipped in Saragozza, and that still more famous Madona of Monferrate in Catalonia, were really, in the opinion of the Spaniards, the works of St. Luke. He might have added, that the Madona of Bologna, is really believed at Bologna, to have been painted by St. Luke, and thus have spared himself the trouble of begging Mr. Sharp's pardon, for his ridiculous digression (as he calls it) in honour of their Madonas ; since Mr. Sharp has only said the very same thing, namely, that many Madonas in Europe are supposed to have been painted by St. Luke.

At Florence, about Galileo's time, was instituted the *Accademia del Cimento*, or of experimental philosophy. It did not last long ; but it is now succeeded by the *Accademia d'Agricoltura*, and if Mr. Baretti is not mistaken, by La Societa Columbaria, whose members apply to natural philosophy, and most particularly

particularly to botany. There are besides in other towns, other academies ; and he quotes Francesco Saverio Quadrio, who has written on this subject, and who affirms that there are above five hundred academies in Italy.—I shall finish this article with the conclusion of the 15th chapter, which possibly may appear to be a most remarkable anticlimax so soon after the pompous mention of five hundred academies. I own, says Mr. Baretti, that arts and sciences are not generally forwarded much by our academies, as far as I can observe ; yet they are upon the whole, rather useful than pernicious, and answer the ends of society, if not of science ; they stand in the place of the clubs in England, which bring people together, and give them the means of becoming friends.

English Account of the Italian Drama.

12th and 13th Chap.—Mr. Sharp is guilty of the most ridiculous self-conceit, when he speaks at large of the present state of the Italian stage; let any man unacquainted with Italy read his five letters on the Italian stage, and he will presently conclude, that the Italians are a people most miserably ignorant of theatrical matters; that they have banished all sense and propriety from their dramas, and that they cannot be pleased with any thing but farcical buffoonery.—But is this giving a true idea of their stage?—Certainly not—The mighty censurer ought, &c.—Let us therefore collect what Mr. Sharp has advanced on this subject, and compare it with the information which Mr. Baretti has given us himself.

Letter 23. Mr. Sharp tells us, that the play-house at Naples labours under great discouragements; that only the lower sort of people frequent it; that the price of the pit is four-pence half-penny, and that it does not hold above eighty people; that he never saw a tragedy there; and that all the comedies he had been at, consisted of three acts only; that Punch,

the Doctor's Man, &c. were the characters, who with their obscenities and extempore wit, in the Neapolitan dialect, delighted the populace; but that in his opinion, the Italians by nature have a genius for comedy; and were the audience more elegant, and more respectable, their actors would appear to have great talents.

Letters 47 and 48. At Florence, Mr. Sharp says, their theatre is much superior to that of Naples, but speaks of their comedies as he does afterwards of those at Turin, (Letter 51) as affording diversion, from mistaking one word for another, blunders, indelicate jokes, &c. and as the price of the pit is only six-pence, he does not see any prospect of the Italian stage being raised to the dignity which it might obtain, were poets and players honoured, protected and rewarded by their princes. He saw for the first time there a comedy of five acts, and a tragedy translated from Voltaire, upon which occasion he speaks very favourably of the declamation of the stage; and I believe this is the substance of what he has said upon the tragedy and comedy of Italy.

Mr. Baretti, in the 12th chapter of his English account, asserts, that as soon as the names
of

of Corneille and Racine began to be commonly known in Italy, many good tragedies were written upon the French model by the wits of those times; and of late, almost all the tragedies of Corneille, Racine, Crebillon, and Voltaire, have been translated into blank verse, and represented. But, he says, the polite people cannot fill a play-house, and the vulgar cannot as yet be brought to relish such compositions, and they would still have kept invariably faithful to their Harlequins, Pantaloons, Brighellas, and the other masks, if Goldoni and Chiari, two dramattick writers, had not suddenly made their appearance about eighteen or twenty years ago. Both these writers are equally contemptible in the eyes of Mr. Baretto; but he speaks highly of the talents of Carlo Gozzi, younger brother to Count Gasparo Gozzi, who has brought ten or twelve plays on the stage, two or three of which Mr. Baretto has perused in manuscript; but he says, the author cannot be prevailed on to publish them. However he arraigns Mr. Sharp in the conclusion of this letter, for not having mentioned Carlo Gozzi and Metastasio; forgetting that Metastasio's works are compositions for the opera-house, and not within the description

scription undertaken by Mr. Sharp : And as to Carlo Gozzi, if Mr. Sharp had never the honour to peruse his manuscripts, and was so unfortunate to be at Venice when the theatres were shut, as he tells us in letter 4th, with what propriety could he have spoken of that excellent writer ? But Mr. Sharp might here with great propriety ask Mr. Baretti why he has not mentioned the name of Carlo Gozzi in his *Frustra Letteraria*.

I shall now bring forth Mr. Baretti's sentiments on this subject, extracted from his *Frustra Letteraria*, by which it will appear that his judgment of the Italian stage, is exactly, or nearly the same, with that of Mr. Sharp, though perhaps, expressed a little more harshly ; but first I shall borrow his thoughts on the Italian stage, as he has given them in his Italian Library, published at London 1757.

Page 124. At present we have nothing in Italy but musical operas, like those exhibited at the Opera-house in the Haymarket, and a kind of plays commonly divided into three acts, and recited extempore, by different companies of low-witted fellows. The serious parts, as they call them, are in Tuscan, (not of the best indeed) : The comical parts by Pantalone, Arlecchino,

Arlecchino, Brighella, Dottore, Coviello; and some others speaking various dialects of Italy.— If they make people laugh with their repartees, and immoral jests, they have an audience; if not, they stare. Our old and good tragedies and comedies, are confined to colleges, and seminaries, where students act them in the carnival time.

One would gather from the above recited paragraph, that the Italians, in the year 1757, represented no other species of comedy, than the extempore comedy; and from the paragraph a little before it, relating to Goldoni and Chiari, that upon the appearance of those writers about 18 or 20 years ago, the Harlequins, Pantaloons, &c. with their extempore wit, had been driven off the stage; but neither of these facts are strictly true, as I shall evince from some of Goldoni's prefaces.

Goldoni tells us, that till the year 1742, he did not write any comedy, where he had composed all the parts; for, before that period, he had written only one or two of the principal characters, and the outlines of the rest, leaving it to the extempore wit of the actors to fill up the parts; that before his time, for above a century past, the comic stage had
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been in so corrupt a state, and the humour of it so wretchedly low and vulgar, that it excited the laughter of the mob only ; and had brought contempt upon it from all the neighbouring kingdoms. Urged therefore by the desire of glory, he had attempted a reformation, and had now written the parts for the masked characters, having found from experience, that when they were left open to the extempore wit of the players, provided they could make their audience laugh, they generally said what came uppermost, without any regard to the scope of the play, and the character of the part they represented.

It appears therefore from Goldoni, that the Harlequins, the Pantaloon, &c. remain on the Italian stage to this day; with the difference only, that many of their parts are written for them ; but look into his plays, and you will find the same humour, and the same characters, speaking the different dialects of Naples, Bologna, Venice, &c. (so indispensable to an Italian audience) as it was the custom to exhibit in the days of their extempore comedy.

Nevertheless I would not have it understood, that the players are entirely restrained from extempore wit at this juncture: it abounds
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upon the Neapolitan stage, and spreads itself more or less, through all the theatres of Italy, to the Italian comedy at Paris; where Carlin the Harlequin entertains the Parisians with an inexhaustible fund of this species of humour.

As Goldoni is much spoken of, and has furnished the Italian stage with a prodigious number of comedies; it may possibly be acceptable to an English reader to hear a few anecdotes of him. Goldoni was designed for the bar; but his genius leading him to the cultivation of the drama, he associated himself with a company of comedians, travelling from city to city; and supplying them with new comedies, whenever they stood in need of them: He tells us that he undertook to furnish sixteen comedies in one year, besides small pieces which were set to musick.—If Goldoni therefore, be ever so distant from Moliere, (a name his favourers have honoured him with) the disadvantage he lay under, from writing so rapidly, and writing for an audience so unpolished, is some excuse for his defects. Voltaire has however born some testimony to his merit; speaks of him as having rescued his country from the tyranny of Harlequin; and applauds the stile of his writings,

tings, so far as to have put them into the hands of the great granddaughter of Corneille, that she may learn from them the Italian language: which single circumstance (says Mr. Baretti in his *Frustra Letteraria*, p. 121.) proves that Voltaire knows just as much Italian, as he does Japanese. Indeed this encomium on Goldoni, who is very low in the estimation of Mr. Baretti, has produced very severe strictures on Voltaire; for a few lines farther, speaking of his pretensions to the knowledge of Spanish and Portuguese, he tells us that Voltaire understands those languages, no better than the Elephants of the Grand Mogul do.—After this short digression, let us see what judgment Mr. Baretti has passed on the stage, in his *Frustra Letteraria*.

P. 255. Mr. Baretti affirms that all the antient Italian tragedies are of little worth, however pedants may praise them; and that the antient comedies are so silly, obscene and nasty, that you would be sick in reading of them.

P. 342. He remarks upon Voltaire's unpoliteness in asserting, that Italy is a country sold to Harlequins, and in possession of Goths; but checks himself upon reflection, and seems to subscribe heartily to the opinion, calling it far-
castically.

castically, a country, where Goldoni and Chiari have found four millions of admirers.—Goldoni, says he, writes a corrupt Italian, composed of three different languages, of Venice, Lombardy, and the Romagnuolo.

P. 343. The comedies of Goldoni swarm with gross errors in language, and in grammar, with low and vulgar phrases, and what is worse, with ridiculous manners, and maxims of obscenity and ribaldry.

P. 344. Mr. Baretti says, Should any ask me, who is a good dramatick writer, if Goldoni be a bad one? my answer is, Gentlemen, we have neither Corneilles nor Molières in our language; therefore we must wait till our good fortune sends them.

P. 134. He says, that Signior Denina (an author he is speaking of) wonders how it should happen, that Italy has not one good writer of tragedy, when her epick poets are so excellent; the reason is, says Mr. Baretti, that there are Ariostos and Tassos for guides, but no Corneilles, nor Racines.

I shall next enquire into the comparative view of the cultivation and populoufness of Italy, as it is represented by Mr. Baretti; but in this pursuit, I shall examine what Mr. Sharp
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has really said, and not what Mr. Baretti makes him say.—Mr. Sharp, speaking of a country in the ecclesiastical dominions, (vide letter 10) says, that it affords the most pleasing images he has seen, of peace and plenty; that the prospect from Mount Vesuvius (letter 40) presents a view of the most fertile country in Europe; that he believes the dutchy of Tuscany is still better cultivated, than either the dominions of his Holiness, or of the King of the Two Sicilies; that all Lombardy is so well cultivated, that he imagines there is not one acre of barren ground, in the whole tract through which he had travelled (letter 49); and in letter 40, he says, that the soil in the valleys is very rich, and so exempt from stones or clay, that he had been many months in Italy before he saw a spade, &c.—On the other hand, he speaks of the desert Campania of Rome, and the barrenness of certain mountains, betwixt Rome and Naples, which are uncultivated.

With regard to the populousness of Italy, he admits, that though there are not many villages in those parts of the dominions of the King of Naples and the Pope, through which he passed; yet that the towns swarmed with inhabitants (letter 40:) That in the city of

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Naples, there are from three to four hundred thousand inhabitants; and in so small a dutchy as that of Tuscany, he has admitted that the number of inhabitants amounted to near a million.

Nevertheless Mr. Baretti has, in p. 99, of his English account, charged Mr. Sharp with having exerted his utmost eloquence, in order to make it believed, that the whole of Italy is uncultivated and unpeopled. Could one have thought it possible, after this enumeration of facts, that Mr. Baretti should have alledged so strange an accusation?

No less uncandid is Mr. Baretti in his 4th chapter, where he arraigns Mr. Sharp for having called the Neapolitans, *a nation diabolical in their nature*. Now Mr. Sharp, so far from impeaching the body of the people collectively, expressly harangues, with a kind of gratitude, on the politeness of the nobility and gentry, and the particular hospitality with which they treat English travellers (letter 30.) Nor can I find in any part of his book, the least imputation on the gentry of Italy; except in what relates to their present mode of gallantry. As to the Neapolitan mob, I believe all disinterested writers have described them as a ferocious
and

and brutal class of men ; but Mr. Sharp has nevertheless spoken of them as more orderly when in good humour, than an English mob, (letter 32,) and diabolical only, when they are exasperated ; but alluding to the promptness with which their passions are kindled, he metaphorically, in another letter, supposes brimstone in their veins. It can be only to these expressions, that Mr. Baretti must have referred for the accusation brought against Mr. Sharp ; but surely it will appear a strange perversion of the sense, to ascribe that temper to the generality of the kingdom, which he has in that very quotation, with the most exact precision, restrained to the lower people.

Besides, it appears to me, that Mr. Sharp, notwithstanding the allegations of Mr. Baretti to the contrary, takes pleasure in proclaiming the good qualities he found amongst the lower people : he speaks of them throughout all Italy, even of the Neapolitan mob, as being totally exempt from the vice of drinking spirituous liquors ; he tells us that the gondaliers at Venice, are a sober body of men, and not dressed in rags like the lower sort of people in England, who spend all their money in porter, &c ; and giving some account of the poor at Flo-

rence, (letter 45,) he says, that compare either their habitations, or their children with those of the inhabitants in the skirts of London, and one would blush for the misery and dissoluteness of our countrymen.

Another charge of the same nature, is that in chapter 29, where Mr. Baretti declares, that from Mr. Sharp's book it appears, that the nobility of Naples have scarcely any sense, wit, virtue or money left. Now it is true, that Mr. Sharp, speaking of their immense estates, denies, excepting in two or three instances, that they are to be compared with those of the English nobility; but he does not say that they have scarcely any money left: and he certainly does no where specify what measure of wit, virtue and sense, is to be found amongst the Neapolitan nobility; or so much as drop a word on the subject: indeed in letter 38, expressing a pardonable warmth for the honour of his native country, he declares it his opinion, that there are in England, more blessings, and more virtues, than are generally met with in other countries: but if Mr. Baretti has applied this paragraph peculiarly to the nobility of Naples, a Frenchman might, with the same propriety, apply it to the court of Versailles, a
Polander

Polander to the Diet at Warsaw, and a Turk to the Divan at Constantinople.

Mr. Sharp has no where given any particular account of the Italian nobility, excepting in one instance; where he describes the Venetian nobles to be tall; but enters no farther into their character: I shall, therefore, in aid of this slight sketch, give the reader some extracts from a description at length, of a Venetian noble, from Mr. Baretti's 26th chapter.—

“ The generality of foreigners shun the conversation of the Venetian nobles, or grow presently sick of it, on discovering that it is too uniform, local, and egotistical, at the commencement of their acquaintance; but after some familiarity, one may soon discover amongst them, so many instances of openness and reserve, of sagacity and imprudence, of courage and timidity, of knowledge and ignorance, and many other opposite qualities, so perfectly blended together, in the same individual, that I know no set of men in Europe, so much worth the trouble of being thoroughly sifted, as the noblemen of Venice. With regard to the Venetian people, those who want to keep fair with their nobles, or make them friends, have a very ready means of admittance

to their kindness, by only praising them in the fulsomest terms, making them believe that their commonwealth is one of the most formidable powers upon earth, and that themselves, individually, are the most knowing, generous, and respectable people in the world: and I do not know whether it is more shocking, or more diverting, to see how open the generality of the Venetian nobles are to the vilest flattery."

Mr. Sharp has drawn heavy censures upon him from Mr. Baretti, for the account he has given us of the frequent murders in Italy; let us therefore examine what both of them have advanced upon this subject. Mr. Sharp ascribes the frequency of assassinations to the protection of the Church; to the difficulty of seizing offenders; to the forms of law, which suffer offenders when seized, to escape; to the few examples of capital punishment; and above all, to the practice of drawing out knives in their sudden quarrels, and stabbing instantly.—Mr. Sharp asserts, that this is the only kind of assassination he heard of, and is known amongst the lower people only; so far is he from taxing the whole body of the people, with being naturally inclined to murder, which Mr. Baretti upbraids

upbraids him with: nay Mr. Sharp, in extenuation of the wickedness of this practice, observes, that the dreadful effects of these quarrels might be avoided, were the good English mode of boxing introduced amongst them (letter 38); intimating, that Englishmen must give a vent to their passions, as well as Italians; and had they no other method of gratifying their revenge but by stabbing, murders might be as common in England as in Italy.

I shall now quote two passages from Mr. Baretti's 5th chapter.—In the first he says, that the Italians have such quick feelings, that even a disrespectful word, or glance, from an equal, will suddenly kindle a good number of them, and make them fall on one another with their knives.—In the second passage, speaking of the difficulty they find in arresting an assassin, he says, “ then our people, from a mistaken principle of humanity, and still more mistaken point of honour, will not give the least assistance to the officers of justice, in the execution of their duty; and you might sooner bring an Italian to suffer martyrdom, than force him to stop any man pursued by them.”

The arguments here adduced by Mr. Baretti, give alone a very satisfactory solution of the question, Why are murders so frequent in Italy? But I shall, for a farther illustration of what Mr. Baretti has advanced, lay before the reader an extract from the Abbé Richard, who has since the date of Mr. Sharp's Letters, published a Description of Italy, and whose accounts are in high esteem. In his 5th vol. p. 237. speaking of the frequent assassinations at Rome, (which however are not supposed to be so numerous as those of Naples, which Mr. Sharp treats of) he says, "The people here are quick and impetuous in their passions; either opposition or jealousy renders them furious: One sees people of the lowest order poignard one another with the most determined resolution. They have no other way of fighting, to all appearance: They are more afraid of a punch in the stomach, than a dagger. In this sort of quarrel, they begin with reviling each other in the most opprobrious manner. When they are provoked to the highest degree, then he who is in the greatest passion, draws out his knife, and the other does the same; which ever of the two strikes first is usually the conqueror, and if he is not wounded, retires as tranquilly,

tranquilly, with his nose in his cloak, as if he had just withdrawn from an act of devotion. The by-standers carry him that is wounded to the hospital, and all is over ; unless by chance, no church is near, and the officers of justice happen to be upon the spot to seize him.— These bloody scenes are very common at Rome ; at least there were twenty of them from December 1761, to May, 1762. Passing by the square of the rotunda, I saw two peasants quarrelling, and in an instant one of them was murdered, without causing any extraordinary commotion amongst the numerous populace who were present. In the unwholesome season (Malaria) of July and August, the government takes no notice of these assassinations, imputing them to the effects of a violent fermentation in the blood.”

I could, if it were necessary, bring proofs from the mouth of the present ingenious and polite cardinal Albani, that executions are rare, and murders numerous, beyond all credibility of proportion ; so prevalent is the maxim in Italy, that “ we have lost already one subject by murder, therefore we must not lose another by execution.” But I believe I have said enough on this interesting subject, to establish

blish the truth of all that Mr. Sharp has suggested. Nevertheless, though the custom be so different, from the causes already assigned, betwixt England and Italy, Mr. Baretti confounds the distinctions, and says, such shocking accidents will happen amidst the best and most polite nations.

Mr. Baretti will not believe that Mr. Murray, the resident at Venice, told Mr. Sharp those things, which Mr. Sharp declares he did tell him ; nor does he even believe that he made him frequent visits. Certainly in this instance Mr. Baretti has been ill instructed ; for I know that Mr. Sharp lived in the greatest intimacy with Mr. Murray, so long as five and thirty years ago ; I know likewise, that Mr. Hamilton himself told Mr. Sharp, and several other Englishmen, the story of the five or six murderers, who had taken sanctuary in his palace, and had found means to escape punishment ; and indeed had not Mr. Hamilton declared the fact publicly, Mr. Sharp would have been exceedingly culpable to have made so free a use of the respectable name of his Britannick Majesty's minister.

I have had likewise an opportunity, since the publication of Mr. Sharp's letters, to be informed by Sir James Gray himself, before he embarked

embarked for Spain, that the story of the murderer, mentioned by Mr. Sharp, is very true; and that he was so importuned by people of the first rank, to drop the prosecution, that he procured the execution of the delinquent, by the single plea, that it was not in his power to comply, without offending the King his master. The murderer was executed at Padua, when Sir James was resident at Venice, and not at Naples, as Mr. Baretti by mistake has represented it, because Mr. Sharp speaks of Sir James Gray, under the name of the late envoy at Naples.

Mr. Baretti is a little disingenuous on the article of sanctuary. He says, that there are certain parts of Italy, where the church is not a sanctuary for murderers; but that it would be too prolix for him to enter into a detail of the several crimes in which the church is, or is not, a sanctuary; and that it is a gross misrepresentation in Mr. Sharp, to say that the church *throughout Italy* shelters murderers and assassins. Who would imagine, after so singular a designation, that Mr. Sharp had never expressed himself in those words? Yet so it is, at least I cannot discover them, and Mr. B. for very good reasons, never refers to the

page, when he pretends to make a quotation. If therefore Mr. Sharp has not used those words, he must be supposed to have spoken of those places where he resided, and where he had an opportunity to be instructed ; I mean Naples, Rome, and Florence ; in neither of which cities, I imagine, Mr. Baretti will deny, that the church is a sanctuary to assassins, though he insinuates as much, when he disputes the reality of an assassin having taken shelter upon the steps of a certain church near an English nobleman's palace in Florence, as related by Mr. Sharp, suspecting him to be a pick-pocket, or a simple robber, and not a murderer, as his lordship knew him positively to be.

The dirtiness of the inns on the Loretto road from Bologna to Rome, and on the road from Rome to Naples, described in Mr. Sharp's letters, have misled many hasty readers of his letters, to consider them as a satire on the customs and manners of Italy : and yet even in this article, where speaking the plain truth is to speak satire, he is so apprehensive, that what he describes as peculiar to those roads, should be precipitately extended by the reader, to the accommodation generally found in the inns of Italy, that he begs his correspondent to remember,

ber, that in their great towns, the accommodation is good and cleanly ; in short, that the description answers those two roads only, (Letter 45).

But that Mr. Sharp in all probability may have drawn a true picture of those inns, may be gathered from the following extract of a letter, dated Naples, October 28, 1766. My correspondent is a very ingenious gentleman of that city, who speaks and writes English, though not in a manner to be compared with Mr. Baretti, whose proficiency in our language is really a matter of astonishment. I shall give the extract however in his own words, describing his journey in company with a friend from Naples to the Faro, or the channel betwixt Naples and Sicily.

“ We went always horse-back : I must say for the glory both of our kingdom and government, that we travelled perhaps in the finest part of Italy, and meet always very bad impracticable roads, very often no inn, or no bed at all, being forced to lye upon the ground : the convents of Capucins, Franciscans, and other religious orders, are the only places where one can be lodged ; but they very seldom have something beside straw, for to lye upon ; and
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then buggs, fleas, and all the animals in the world, bite you to nothing.—In many places we could find no convenience for our horses, or ourselves; because the generality of the people, they live upon oignons, garlick, and very nasty bread.”

In answer to Mr. Sharp's account of the beds, the cooks, the postilions, and the post-horses on the Loretto road, Mr. Baretti denies peremptorily, that Mr. Sharp did travel post, or once entered into a post-house on that road, though Mr. Sharp has so positively asserted it. This instance might be added to many more, where Mr. Baretti gives Mr. Sharp the flat lye, to the facts he advances; an argument to which it is difficult to make a sensible answer; but I who know Mr. Sharp, as I said before, know that Mr. Baretti has been imposed upon in this case, and indeed all the cases where he has trusted to his informer, as grossly as he himself imposes on his readers, when he makes Mr. Sharp expatiate on the extreme wretchedness of the inhabitants of Ancona; though Mr. Sharp speaks only of the prospect of Ancona, in letter 10, and of the extreme wretchedness of the peasantry in the neighbourhood of Ancona, in letter 12.

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Mr. Baretti is however remarkably vehement and diffusive on this groundless charge, and seems to point it out as one of the principal evidences, to prove that Mr. Sharp was disqualified to make observations on Italy. He should have stopt a little while, says he, at Ancona, to have formed a better judgment of that place ; nevertheless, with submission to Mr. Baretti, I should suppose, that any body except himself will admit, that Mr. Sharp may with propriety speak of the prospect of Ancona, without having taken a bed at Ancona.

I shall not pursue Mr. Baretti in all the attacks he has made on what Mr. Sharp has said, much less on what he has not said ; the detail would be tedious, and very little interesting to the reader. Perhaps I ought to apologize for the following article, relating to Loretto, but I am led to mention it by the uncommon candour of Mr. Baretti on this occasion, who has misrepresented Mr. Sharp's account but in one particular, I mean that of describing the garrison to consist of 60 or 100 soldiers, which Mr. Sharp says consists of 30 only ; not but that the increase of strength he has given it, destroys, in some degree, the basis on which Mr. Sharp has grounded his conjecture. Speaking
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of the treasures at Loretto, Mr. Sharp has dropt an opinion (not a wish, as Mr. Baretti insinuates) that as the garrison consists only of 30 soldiers, should a Corsair, with a hundred and fifty, or two hundred men, attempt to surprize it, a coup de main well managed, he thinks, might succeed. Mr. Addison too has supposed, that a christian power, who has ships passing to and fro, might without suspicion effect that enterprize.

Instead of considering the hint as good natured, and possibly useful, Mr. Baretti, upon this occasion, rallies with great humour their protestant zeal, and says, if Mr. Addison had examined Loretto, he would not have exposed himself to the ridicule of those Roman catholics, who know something of the matter. But Mr. Baretti does not seem to attend sufficiently to the rapidity of an action, called a coup de main ; though no man understands the living languages better than himself. What, says he, could such a body of men do, against a garrison of 50 or 60 men, (he will not say more than a hundred) besides the inhabitants in and out of the town ? He asserts too, that the town is tolerably fortified, and the paths to it craggy ; yet I believe the troops that mounted

ed the precipices of Louisbourg and Quebec, would have found a much easier entrance into Loretto. Nevertheless to speak the truth, the point is merely speculative, and hardly worth the time I have bestowed upon it ; though one may be bold to foretell, that should an attempt be ever made, the great obstacle to the success, will not be the number of soldiers and inhabitants, nor the steepness of the hill, nor the tolerableness of the fortification, but the difficulty of a Corsair sailing up the Adriatick undiscovered, and returning safely with his plunder to Barbary.

As Mr. Sharp has incurred Mr. Baretti's displeasure, by insinuating that the poor of Naples chuse the education of a musical conservatorio, rather than follow a laborious employment, I shall quote Mr. Baretti on trade, from both his English and Italian opinions.

P. 306. Most branches of manufactures, says he in the English account, flourish amongst the Italians ; and those manufactures are purchased from them by all the commercial world. — Now hear what he says in his *Frustra Letteraria*, p. 342. — With regard to foreign manufactures, we need only take into our hands, a watch, a case, a box, a button, in short any

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bauble made either in France or in England, to be presently convinced, that innumerable things manufactured in Italy, stand in no competition with the same articles manufactured in those countries.

He says in the 17th chapter of the English account, that however despicable Mr. Sharp may have represented trade, the Italian merchants are looked upon in a very honourable light.—I do not question, but that sensible men there, must look upon them as promoting the good of their country, which undoubtedly is a very honourable light; but I believe our gentlemen who have made the tour of Italy, will declare with one voice, that merchants and traders, or the wives of merchants and traders, are seldom or never admitted unmasked to the assemblies of the nobility, either in Florence, Rome, or Naples, and that the nobles are exceedingly punctilious on that article. Indeed, if this were not the fact, how absurd must Goldoni's Play of the *Femmine Puntigliose* (the Punctilious Ladies) have appeared on the Italian theatre? Would not the audience have immediately hissed it off the stage, and declared aloud, that they knew no such manners?—The fable of the play is this: A rich merchant of Leghorn the first year

year of his marriage, makes a tour with his wife to Florence ; she is excessively ambitious to be admitted into the conversazioni of quality, which she effects by bribing a certain countess with a hundred crowns to introduce her ; and to save appearances, she loses them in the shape of a wager touching the hour of the day, as was previously settled betwixt them by a mutual confidant. The merchant had quit-
 ted trade about three months, which circumstance had flattered his wife that she should find so much the more easy access ; but the whole tenour of the Play proves, that such commerce is incompatible. The ladies she is introduced to, upon the discovery of her rank in life, are extremely affronted, and very rude to her. In the last scene, the merchant's wife takes her revenge in exposing the countess who had received the hundred crowns ; and the moral of the Play seems to be simply this, that we should always seek such company who are our equals, and that no one should aspire beyond those limits ; with which maxim the poet concludes the play.

Mr. Sharp has also (in Letter 7th) said, It is whispered at Venice, that many of the Nobles are concerned in clandestine partnerships.

Now in support of this assertion, and in opposition to that of Mr. Baretti, who maintains that the Nobles make no scruple to appear in trade, I shall quote another play of Goldoni, called *Il Cavalier di buon Gusto*; and as Goldoni is a native, and has been long an inhabitant of Venice, he may be presumed to know the customs of that city. In this comedy the Count Octavio, who is supposed by his extravagance to have wasted his own patrimony, and the estate of his nephew, to whom he was guardian, discovers in the winding up of the plot, that he had been enabled to make a figure in the world, by a clandestine partnership with the Venetian merchant Pantaloon; and takes this opportunity to declare, that commerce does not derogate from the character of a Cavalier, and it was only in submission to the prejudices of the world, that he had chosen to traffick privately.

We shall next take a view of what Mr. Baretti and Mr. Sharp have advanced on the subject of musick. It was natural for Mr. Sharp, the moment he arrived at Naples, (the nursery both of vocal and instrumental performers) to make his first enquiry upon what footing that science stood there. He describes the magnifi-

cence and vastness of their opera-house, the manner of lighting it, the nature of the subscription for the support of operas, the salaries of their singers, &c. &c.

The description of the theatre, illuminations, &c. Mr. Baretti affirms to be miserable trifles, and erroneous for the greatest part; though he grants he was never at Naples, and therefore cannot be supposed to be a competent judge of that matter: However, admitting the justness of his animadversion; yet what regards the customs and manners of Italy on this point, possibly may not be esteemed frivolous; and therefore I shall quote Mr. Baretti himself in support of the principal facts which Mr. Sharp has alledged.

Mr. Sharp says, that all the young ladies of fashion are placed in convents, where musick is seldom a part of their education: (Mr. Baretti has chosen to quote the first edition, where it is inadvertently asserted to be *no* part of their education;) wherefore the women of fashion in Italy are not in general, so well instructed in musick, as the ladies of fashion in England, Mr. Baretti, who sets out with declaring in his 17th chapter, that he is a stranger to the transactions of the musical world, and that he is

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equally ignorant of musick with Mr. Sharp, grants however, that Mr. Sharp was right, when he says, “ Musick is not much thought of in the education of our young ladies.”—Mr. Baretti is pleased to give us the reasons why Italian ladies are not so educated: he tells us, that in the warm climate of Italy, the sensibility of the young ladies is such, that (p. 291.) musick would discompose their little hearts; besides, that Italian parents do all they can to guard against the immoral characters of musick masters, as much as British parents in England, do against the indecencies of the stage; for, says he, musick in Italy gives a voluptuous and wicked turn of mind to the generality of its professors and singers, which last are despised equally with their dancers; besides, he says, that Italians hold musick cheap, because they have so great a plenty of it.

Mr. Sharp has said, that the opera-house is a kind of rendezvous for the polite people, and that they talk loudly during the performance, to the annoyance of those who wish to hear, and to the great mortification of the singers; and that it is not the custom there, as in England, to use a wax light, so that in the pit, it is impossible for most men to read the
opera,

opera.—A very acute remark, says Mr. Baretti, (p. 311.) to which I have nothing to say, but that the Italians are not so good natured as the English, who have patience enough to run carefully over a stupid piece of nonsense, while a silly eunuch is mincing a vowel into a thousand invisible particles. When we are at the opera, we consider those fellows in the lump, as one of the many things that induced us to be there ; and we pay the same attention to their singing, which we pay to other parts of that diversion. We fix our eyes, for instance, a moment or two on the scenes and the dresses, when they happen to be new and superlatively well imagined ; and our fingers would be very ridiculous indeed, if to their customary impudence they added that of pretending to much more regard than what we pay to the pencil of an ingenious painter, or even to the elegance of a fanciful taylor. And then, though the opera be Metastasio's, we know for certain beforehand, that it is as perfectly butchered by the Opera Poet, as those that are exhibited in the Hay-market. This being the case, would it not be supremely ridiculous to pore for some hours over an opera book with a small wax-light in our hands ?—This last sen-

tence may serve to justify Mr. Sharp against the reproaches of Mr. Baretti, for his silence with regard to Metastasio in his account of operas and opera-houses.

Mr. Baretti, in his 29th chapter, says, that Mr. Sharp has misrepresented facts, when he informs us that the government of Venice receives private information by the Lyon's mouths, which are placed in certain parts of the Doge's palace; for that this method of informing, is no longer practised there, and that if Mr. Sharp had looked into these heads, he would have seen that they have been long full of cobwebs, and choaked with dust. This latter part of the assertion, I think I can venture to declare is not true; and the first appears questionable to me, because it is improbable that so essential a change in the constitution of Venice, should have escaped the notice of travellers, few of which omit to mention the Lyon's mouths, down to the Abbé Richard, and the French gentleman who published within these five years, his *Memoires sur l'Italie par deux gentilshommes Suedois*. The first of these writers speaks of them in vol. 2d. p. 292; the other in his 2d vol. p. 64.—Besides I know from Mr. Sharp, that a merchant who resides at
Venice,

Venice, pointed out these lyons, and explained their use to him. Now that travellers who have made it their business to examine, and that an inhabitant of Venice, who may be supposed to have some curiosity on this subject, should all agree in esteeming that a notorious truth, which Mr. Baretti represents as a notorious falsehood, makes the fact, I should imagine, questionable, and gives some reason to suspect, that Mr. Baretti, by some accident, has been led into a mistake on this article.

Mr. Sharp has given an opinion in his 15th letter, that certain muscles in the statue of the Farnesian Hercules, are not of the shape the artist would have given them, had he copied from nature. Mr. Baretti thinks that Glycon was a better judge of the human form than Mr. Sharp, and consequently, that Mr. Sharp's criticism is presumptuous. Vol. 2. p. 308.

But though that celebrated statuary was a more competent judge of the human form than Mr. Sharp, and might have been a more competent judge also of anatomy, had he been furnished with the means of cultivating that science, yet the fact is, that neither the Greeks nor the Romans were conversant in human dissections,

dissections, nor had their statuaries at any time an opportunity of seeing the muscles of a man artfully denuded. The practice of dissecting brutes only prevailed so much, even in the time of Galen, that he speaks of a human skeleton at Alexandria, as a singular phænomenon, and recommends young medical students to go thither from Rome, in order to make themselves masters of osteology.

In the limbs, the fleshy parts of the muscles are round and thick, so that they swell exceedingly upon inflation, and in athletick men, evidently mark their several interstices under the skin, which is the reason why Glycon has represented the muscles of the limbs in their exact shape and position; but some of the thin muscles not swelling sufficiently in action, to point out their precise boundaries under the skin, he has probably been obliged, from the want of an original, to supply with his imagination, a musculage which is not absolutely natural. This error is more remarkable in the hinder part of the neck and back, than in any of the other muscles of the Farnesian Hercules. If you cast an eye on a figure, where the muscles of the neck and back are dissected, you will observe the trapezius muscle possessing a large extent of that
part. —

part.—Now, were this muscle as much inflated, as the muscles of the Farnesian Hercules are, it would nearly represent two triangles (one on each side of the spine) ; but the artist has not given it that shape ; wherefore, with great deference to the amazing genius of Glycon, we may still admit the beauty, but call in question the truth of the musculage:

I think Mr. Sharp has no where attempted to give a general character of the Italians. Probably he knew the difficulty of such an attempt, and how liable it would be to cavils, however well executed. Therefore he has neither said that the Italians are learned, or ignorant, witty, or dull, brave, or cowardly, merciful, or cruel, vindictive, or forgiving, handsome, or homely ; in short, he has mentioned but one character, which he ascribes to the whole body of the people, from the highest to the lowest ; I mean the universal practice of sobriety, even to a total exemption from the vice of drunkenness.

It is true that Mr. Sharp has taken the freedom to censure certain religious ceremonies of the Italians ; but it does not appear that he spoke ludicrously of them whilst he was in Italy, and I dare answer for him, that he never
once

once in his life uttered a disrespectful word on the catholick religion in a catholick country, or even in the presence of a catholick in his own country. He has no where impeached the principles of their faith, but only those practices, which protestants esteem superstitious mummeries, tending to rob the laity of their civil rights and privileges ; and though Mr. Sharp might with great propriety, have published a defence of protestantism in England, by exposing the follies which still subsist in Italy, without expecting to be accountable for it ; yet he was so unwilling to give offence, that he apologizes to the catholicks of England, for this step, knowing that many of the wise and moderate amongst them, wish they were well rid of some of their antient pageantries. Had Mr. Baretti imitated this conduct, he would not in the midst of a country, under whose laws he enjoys the uncontrolled liberty of saying and writing what he pleases, have trespassed so far on that indulgence, as to enter into a formal vindication of monkery processions, festivals, &c. and so indiscreetly brand the Reformation with the name of the *Great Schism*, (Vide chap. 19. vol. 2.)

But if Mr. Sharp has avoided to give a general

ral character of the Italians, Mr. Baretti has supplied that deficiency in page 374 of his *Frustra Letteraria*.—It is in a letter written by an uncle just returned from his travels, to a beautiful niece. Mr. Baretti says it is worthy of a place in his papers. Here follows an extract from it.

“ In this our vile (vigliaca) Italy, it is but too much a shameful custom, when any man sits near a woman, immediately to talk to her in an impudent manner, of unlawful love. Whether she be virgin, wife, or widow, provided she be young, she must be condemned to hear a thousand nauseous whispers from every man who approaches her. It is impossible, my dear Clotilda, but that this must have been often your case, so universally is it the mode in this corrupt country, to insult female modesty.”

And in vol. 2d, p. 28. Mr. Baretti tells us, it is proverbially said, that men are every where the same; nevertheless, in my travels through Europe, continues he, I have observed in certain countries, an abundance of individuals of a certain character which are rarely found in other countries. I have not, for example, been able to discover in any other part of Europe,

rope, such an infinite number of blockheads (*Omaccioni e Omiccatoli*) as we see in Italy, who never distinguish good from evil. Would to God that this observation were false——But alas ! it is a truth that our Italy swarms on every side, with people, who not only mistake insolence and impudence for vivacity and courage ; impoliteness and rudeness for frankness and sincerity ; nastiness and beastliness in conversation, for pleasantry and gallantry ; but even lies, falsehood, and sometimes treachery itself, for acuteness of parts, strength of understanding, and superiority of wisdom, or at least for superiority of knowledge of the world. I could bring, says Mr. Baretti, a thousand and a thousand proofs of this observation, &c. &c.

Mr. Baretti, in his 18th chapter, tells us, that Mr. Sharp and several protestant travellers assert, that the Italians place all their young ladies in convents, and leave them there until they marry, or take the veil ; but that it is a falsehood. Mr. Baretti illustrates his argument by supposing, that in the dutchy of Tuscany there are thirty-six thousand young girls, who are able to pay for education ; but that in fact there are scarcely six hundred pensioners (board-

ers at convents) in all Tuscany.—By this supposition of thirty-six thousand young women, it appears evidently, that Mr. Baretti and Mr. Sharp have not turned their thoughts to the same class of people ; for Mr. Sharp, I believe, mentions the circumstance of education, only in two places, the one in letter 19, where he assigns a reason why the fine ladies at Naples are not so well instructed in musick as the fine ladies in London ; and in letter 48, where he accounts for the great number of gentlemen in comparison of ladies, at the Italian conversazioni. Undoubtedly therefore, Mr. Baretti has misunderstood Mr. Sharp, who referred only to the daughters of the nobility and people of the first families, the numbers of which are very small, compared with his calculation.

But if the young ladies of fashion are not educated in convents, it may be asked where are they educated ? Are not convents in Italy answerable to our ladies boarding-schools in England ? However, supposing the majority of young ladies to be educated elsewhere, that circumstance would not invalidate the assertion that few single women are seen at their spectacles, their conversazioni, &c. but only the solution of the question, why they are not seen there ?

there?—Travellers have ascribed it to the confinement of a convent; Mr. Baretti has left the controversy open, not specifying in what manner they are confined. I will nevertheless grant to Mr. Baretti, that if it be true that ladies of fashion are not generally educated in convents, he has removed one of the most popular errors under which Englishmen laboured: But it seems to me, that in arguing this point he has run himself into a difficulty, from which it will not be easy to extricate him; for if, as he says, an old maiden is an object scarcely ever to be seen in Italy, and if this fact is true also of the families of the nobility, it should follow, that as the number of women is nearly equal to the number of men, and the number of nuns is but very small, it should follow, I say, that the young men of family would be all married; and we ought to see as many women in their assemblies (for wives do not stay at home) as we see men; but the truth is, that we see few women in comparison of men, which has been hitherto imputed to the confinement of single ladies in their convents. How Mr. Baretti will clear up this difficulty, I do not rightly understand, as it is esteemed an indisputable fact, that few brothers in a noble family

family, do marry from a principle of preserving the family estate in the name, which by the custom of Italy is divided upon the death of a father, amongst all the sons.

Page 9. Mr. Baretti likewise asserts, that Italians in general are very sorry when their girls take it into their silly heads to become nuns; and so far are they from clapping them forcibly, or even chearfully into a nunnery, that they do all in their power to reconcile them to the world; sometimes they ridicule them, sometimes they scold them, and sometimes they carry them to masquerades, operas, and publick walks, where young men ogle, bow, and whisper, &c.

This may possibly be a true representation of the manners of Italy in regard to nunneries, and the education of young ladies of fashion; but it may likewise be doubted; for though a foreigner cannot guard too much against mistaking singularities for customs, yet I must mention one instance under my own observation, which clashes with the doctrine laid down by Mr. Baretti.—When I was at Naples I had the honour of a card from a noble duke, whose daughter was to take the veil, inviting me to attend at the ceremony of her profession. This

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duke

duke had many daughters, some of whom had already taken the veil, and so little sorrow did I perceive (upon the loss of another daughter) either in his countenance, or the countenance of his friends, that the cheerfulness of their behaviour and vivacity of their conversation after the function, was the circumstance which struck me most particularly in the occurrences of that day.

Mr. Baretti, chap. 6. p. 4. ridicules the opinion that in Italy matches are generally the effects of parental authority, and not of mutual affections amongst the young people who sometimes, according to Mr. Sharp, do not see each other more than once or twice before the celebration of their marriage; nevertheless though it may be difficult to prove in a distant country, what is a matter of notoriety in another country, I shall hazard from Goldoni, a kind of proof that in Italy it is a common custom among the gentry, I mean to dispose of children in marriage without their participation. Goldoni says, that his *Serva Amoroſa* (the Amorous Waiting-maid) was one of his most fortunate productions, and met with the greatest success. I shall therefore suppose, that the favourite character in it, Corallina, could hardly

ly have given us a picture of their manners, utterly repugnant to truth ; yet in one scene of the comedy, she expresses herself in the following words. “ It would be extremely right says she, if in this business of matrimony, the young couple might speak once at least to each other without controul, and to be secure of a reciprocal affection before they were contracted.” But without Goldoni’s assistance, I might have brought an undeniable authority from Mr. B. himself, who in page 95 alledges, that the Great generally marry for the sake of alliance or interest, without much consulting inclination.

I am now come to the article of Ciciſbeism. The account Mr. Sharp has given of its present state in Venice, Florence, Naples, and Rome, has drawn upon him the heaviest imputations from Mr. Baretti ; but I shall not enter into the examination of this part of Mr. Sharp’s letters, before I give the substance of what he has advanced on this head.—He says that in Venice, a gentleman who attends on, or gallants a married lady, is called a Cavaliere servente, and in the other parts of Italy a Ciciſbeo. This Ciciſbeo waits on her to the Spectacles, the Conversazioni, and Corso (the

publick walks): He says, that husbands do not appear at these places in the company of their wives; nor will fashion allow one woman to conduct another, so that they become constrained to admit of Cicisbeo's, unless they will condescend to live always at home, which cannot be expected from women of distinction, who alone assume the privilege of appearing with their Cicisbeos, and of whom alone Mr. Sharp must necessarily speak. He goes on to tell us, that the character of Cicisbeo is not understood to be an innocent one; and that the ladies are supposed not to live in greater purity with them than with their husbands, and generally speaking, with much less. That the husbands have their revenge in being the Cicisbeos to other ladies; that the present state of Cicisbeism in Italy is a greater revolution in the manners of a people, than probably can be instanced in any other country; for that formerly husbands were jealous, and immured their wives, but that now Italian ladies have more liberty than any other women in Europe: That notwithstanding the notoriety of the practice, all the ladies behaved with so much modesty and decorum, that he was almost tempted to treat the reports he had heard as
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mere detraction. That spending so many evenings at the envoy's palace in Naples, where the foreign ministers and the first quality of Naples resorted, he had the opportunity of seeing there great numbers of ladies, with their Cicisbeo's, who visited and associated together in the same manner that plain men do with their wives in England. I believe I have there given the most essential part of the description.

It must be granted that the account seems strange and incredible; and a man who should contradict Mr. Sharp would easily find credit from every one who has not been in Italy, and from every one who has not lived in Italy, amongst people of the first rank there; for I do not question but that there are many natives of that country who are ignorant of what passes in the great world.

But Mr. Baretti says that it is impossible to be true; that could the Italians read so much illiberal abuse, and ferocious declamation on them and their manners, they would stare, and many of the ladies would certainly wish him for a while under the tuition of some good exorcist; and that he never will be able to persuade the world there is a vast tract of land in a christian country, where some hundred thou-

fands of husbands are most regularly and most infamously wronged by their wives, &c.

Mr. Baretti in this place, as in many others, in order to involve Mr. Sharp in absurdity, shifts the proposition from particulars to generals, from the narrow circle of the polite world, who only have adopted this species of gallantry, to all ranks and classes of people, to some hundreds of thousands, says Mr. Baretti. I presume however, that Mr. Baretti will not deny that few young married ladies of distinction (I might say old married ladies) are seen without their cicisbeos ; that husbands do not appear in publick with their wives, but that their wives are accompanied by the cicisbeos ; that look into a coach at the Corso, the gentleman and lady you see in it are not a husband and wife, but a wife and cicisbeo ; that cicisbeo's have the opportunity of many private conversations with their ladies both at home and abroad, from the hour of rising to the hour of going to bed.— But, says Mr. Baretti, granting all this to be true, the commerce betwixt cicisbeos and their ladies, except in a few instances, is still innocent, which innocence of behaviour he ascribes to a spirit of chivalry derived from their ancestors, and to Platonick notions which prevail all
over

over Italy. Almost all the polite Italians, says he, imbibe such sentiments as soon as they acquire the power of reading, and learn that the contemplation of earthly beauty raises an honest mind to the contemplation and love of the heavenly (p. 104.); in short, according to Mr. Baretti, to *cicisbee* a lady, means only to whisper a lady, the old word *cicisbeare* bearing that import: but, adds he, Mr. Sharp knows nothing of the matter, through an ignorance of our language and poetry, particularly the writings of Petrarch, which would have served as a key to our general customs and manners.

It is however a little extraordinary that he should suppose this private intercourse betwixt ladies and their *cicisbeos* to be so very pure, when he admits that the young ladies have such a sensibility peculiar to the climate of Italy, that they are not to be trusted at their harpsichords with the languishings of a *Misento morir*, set to musick by a feeling composer, nor with the company of musick-masters, for a great inconvenience; what the inconvenience is Mr. Baretti leaves us to imagine (p. 299.); but in England, says he, where the temperature of the climate is a guard against these lively impressions, young ladies may safely apply to musick.

I shall not oppose Mr. Baretti on the nature of our climate ; but notwithstanding this phlegm which he ascribes to the constitution of our English young ladies, I can assure him that were any of our married women to dedicate their private hours to a certain individual, were they to appear at his elbow in all places of resort, at routs, drums, &c. tho' they lay every night in their husband's bed, their phlegm would not exempt them from the suspicion of intrigue, which would be esteemed, even in this climate, unavoidable in the midst of so many opportunities ; and such ladies would certainly be stigmatized and shunned.

These reasonings I may be told are plausible, but not convincing, and that better and more positive proofs are necessary to persuade an English reader that these manners are not the fancy of Mr. Sharp's brains, but the real manners of the great cities in Italy. To produce a proof from the writings of respectable Italian authors, that he has said nothing but what has been said by them before, might have probably been a difficult task. Should an Italian, after his return from England, assert that in some of the great streets in London, multitudes of prostitutes walk there for the purpose of seduction, without

without giving umbrage either to magistracy or the neighbourhood, he might be charged with falshood, and called upon for his proofs, which however he might not be furnished with, though the fact be so notorious :—this fortunately is not my case ; I have in my hands certain writings which throw some light on this controverty, and I believe establish the truth of what Mr. Sharp has advanced.

Mr. Baretti says (p. 204.) that foreigners should look for sure information concerning our customs and manners in the poem of Passeroni of Milan, and not in the idle and shallow performances of Mr. Sharp and other such conceited and ignorant travellers. At Milan, he says, there is likewise one Parini, who will certainly prove a very eminent poet, if he continues to write. His *Mattino* and *Mezzodi* have filled me with hopes that he will soon be the Pope, or the Boileau of Italy, as he is already almost equal to them in justness of thinking, and exactness of expression, and seems to surpass them in richness of imagery and fecundity of invention.

As Parini is celebrated for his justness of thinking, and exactness of expression, I shall lay before the reader what he thinks and says
on

on cicisbeism, in his poem called *Il Mattino* (the Morning).—This poem is designed to expose the reigning vices and follies of the present age in Italy; and is therefore dedicated to *Fashion*. It is a picture of a luxurious young man of high birth, sitting up all night, and lying in bed all the morning, with his fidlers, his taylor, his dancing-masters, &c. attending at his levee. When the poet has described his valet de chambres, his friseurs, &c. adorning his person, he addresses himself to the hero of his piece, and says, It is now time you should consider of the companion whom heaven has destined for you, to divide the burthen of an idle life——Do you grow pale? I do not speak of marriage; I should be a musty fellow indeed to give such foolish antiquated counsel.—Then rallying the state of matrimony, he says, “May he perish who advises you to marriage.” Nevertheless you shall have a partner, who is young, and who is the wife of another, since the inviolable custom of the polite world, of which you are a member, will have it so.

Pera dunque chi a te nozze consiglia,
 Ma nonperò senza compagna andrai,
 Che sia Giovane Dama, ed al trui Sposa;
 Poichè

Poichè sì vuole in violabil rito

Del bel mondo, onde tu fè cittadino——

Afterwards the poet enters into a detail of this revolution in the manners of Italy, which he illustrates by the following allegory ; of which I shall give an imperfect translation.

In antient times the mother of Cupid placed him under the care of his brother Hymen, because she was afraid that being blind he might wander and lose his way, and also that he would not be able to direct his arrows so as to preserve the human race ; therefore she gave orders that he should shoot the arrows and Hymen should direct them. Thus the sweet couple went always in those days, hand in hand, every shepherd and shepherdess were united in the bands of wedlock. Sol saw them together all the day, sitting by the fountain, or the purling stream ; and Diana beheld them all the night in the happy nuptial bed, which the two Gods strewed most plentifully with lilies and with roses. But when the wings of Cupid had acquired sufficient strength, he mounted the skies, and with a furious countenance, entering Olympus, and brandishing his bow of steel, he loudly proclaimed, I will sway
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the scepter alone—Then turning to his mother, he said, Shall Cupid, the most powerful amongst the Gods, and the first-born of Venus, receive law from a vile younger brother? Shall I not dare to strike the same heart more than once, because it so pleases that dirty fellow? Shall I never have it in my power, after I have fastened a knot, to loose it, aye, and fasten it again if it be my pleasure? Shall I suffer him to daub my arrows with his unguents, and weaken their poison, that they may more safely enter the human breast? Why does he not also rob me of my bow and quiver, and leave me naked, a mere outcast of the Gods?—O the charming life were he to reign in my place! What a scene of ridiculousness to view him throwing about ice instead of fire, and impotently exerting himself to drive weariness and aversion from languid souls! Therefore, dear mother, hearken; I find that I am able, and I will reign alone: Divide the power betwixt us in the manner which may be most agreeable to you, but so that mankind for the future may not find me in the company of Hymen.—The Citherean Goddess endeavoured to sooth his passion; she begged, she wept, but all in vain: wherefore, addressing herself to her two sons,

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the composed the quarrel in the following words: Since then there can be no peace betwixt you, let your government be divided; and that one brother may be always separated from the other, let your hours and your occupations be different. You who are so impetuous and so proud of your darts, be it your province to wound the soul and govern by day; and you, who are crowned with roses, let it be your charge to couple *mere bodies*, and with your flaming torch take the command by night. Hence, continues he, is derived that polite mode, which grants to husbands the dark hours, and the chaste bodies of their wives; and to you, O most blessed and most noble race of men, the hearts of those very wives, and an absolute command by day.

Should Mr. Baretti urge that this is a poem, and that great allowances are to be made for the exaggerations of poetry, I shall only observe, that Parini, who is so *just in his thinking*, and so *exact in his expression*, has described the present state of cicisbeism (were the poem stripped of its poetical ornaments) just as Mr. Sharp has described it, and I presume just as it now stands:—but if poetry be insufficient, I hope what Mr. Baretti himself has given us in
 prose

prose on this subject will prove more satisfactory. It is in his *Frustra Letteraria*, Vol. 1. p. 184, where he has written an imaginary letter from a bride to her husband, and says, such kind of letters would be more useful to the world, than the epithalamiums, &c, now in vogue upon every marriage. Here follows an extract from it.

“ Though I am young, I know the wickedness of the age, I know that several men will be, or pretend to be, enamoured of me, as soon as the hurry of my wedding, and a few of my bridal days are over. I know that more than one of your dearest friends will not let slip the opportunity of dropping privately sweet and flattering insinuations, to induce me to break my matrimonial vow; and I know that few, very few, will scruple to rob you of the heart of your wife; and to contaminate and corrupt it. One will attack me with humble language, another with down-cast looks, another with presents, another with procuring me diversions, another with free conversation, another with obscenity, and another with different unjust methods; but I will stand firmly like a tower of brass, &c.—Nevertheless, dear husband, it will be necessary on the other hand, that in spite of *irresistable Fashion*, you shall

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never

never be ashamed of being seen with me, *even in publick* ; that you shall not blush to confess you love me ; however such a confession may sometimes expose a married man to the derision of fools. It will be necessary that you not only refrain from acting as a Cicisbeo, or Cavaliere Servente, though with an intention to pass your time innocently ; but you must also take care to keep me in the opinion, even after the first month of our marriage, that you prefer me to every other creature of my species."

To the instances which have already been given of the manner in which Mr. Sharp's Letters have been quoted by Mr. Baretti, the following are added, that the reader may be better able to judge of the criticisms which he has founded on such quotations.

Mr. Sharp, in his 19th Letter, says, That musical talents are rewarded in England tenfold above what they are in Naples, *except* in the single instance of the first class of Opera Singers, who are paid extravagantly. To give this observation the appearance of absurdity, Mr. Baretti, Vol. 1. p. 148. quotes Mr. Sharp as saying in one line that the Opera performers are not paid so liberally as in London ; and in the next, that Gabrieli had for one year only, nine hundred English pounds.

Mr.

Mr. Sharp, in Letter 51, says, That he saw people making hay in the small plots of the King of Sardinia's gardens at Turin. Mr. Baretti, Vol. 2. p. 216. makes him say that the King of Sardinia *sells grass*.

Mr. Baretti, in Vol. 2. p. 76. charges Mr. Sharp with having resided two months in a town, where the Friars are more numerous than in any other in Europe, and having nothing more to say of them but that they are superstitious, and have *fat guts*; but the words *fat guts* are not to be found in Mr. Sharp's Letters.

To give a ridiculous turn to Mr. Sharp's description of the Opera House at Naples, Mr. Baretti tells us, that he *measured with his eye the amazing extent*, &c. Vol. 1. p. 169. Mr. Baretti has here, in his customary manner, used Italics, intimating that they are the very words of Mr. Sharp, which is not the fact.

Mr. Sharp in Letter 10th, alluding to the triumphant state of the Church in the Ecclesiastical dominions, says, That *every place labours here* under great disadvantages, from the infinite concessions that are made to the Church, by the commercial and military parts of the nation. Mr. Baretti, to render him ridiculous, changes the words *every place labours*

labours here, for the words *Ancona lies here*, &c. by which contrivance he makes Mr. Sharp say that of the small town of Ancona, which is really said of the whole nation; and then proceeds very gayly to inform us, that he never heard at Ancona of the Anconitan nation. Vol. 1st, p. 13.

Vol. 2d, p. 315. Mr. Baretti makes Mr. Sharp affirm, that whether you travel with Voiturins, or by the Post, through Savoy, you still advance at the same slow rate. The whole of this extract is a fiction; for neither the opinion, nor one word of the sentence is to be found in Sharp's Letters. Mr. Sharp has said no more than what is contained in the following paragraph.—A man may travel post, if he pleases, through the Alps; but it is attended with some trouble; and as I would not advise any one to drive fast on the edges of those precipices, I shall forbear to enter into any detail on that subject. Vide the admonition, annexed to the Letters.

I presume the reader is now persuaded that the greater part of the heavy censures drawn down upon Mr. Sharp are either for words which he never said, or for words which Mr. Baretti himself had nearly said before him.

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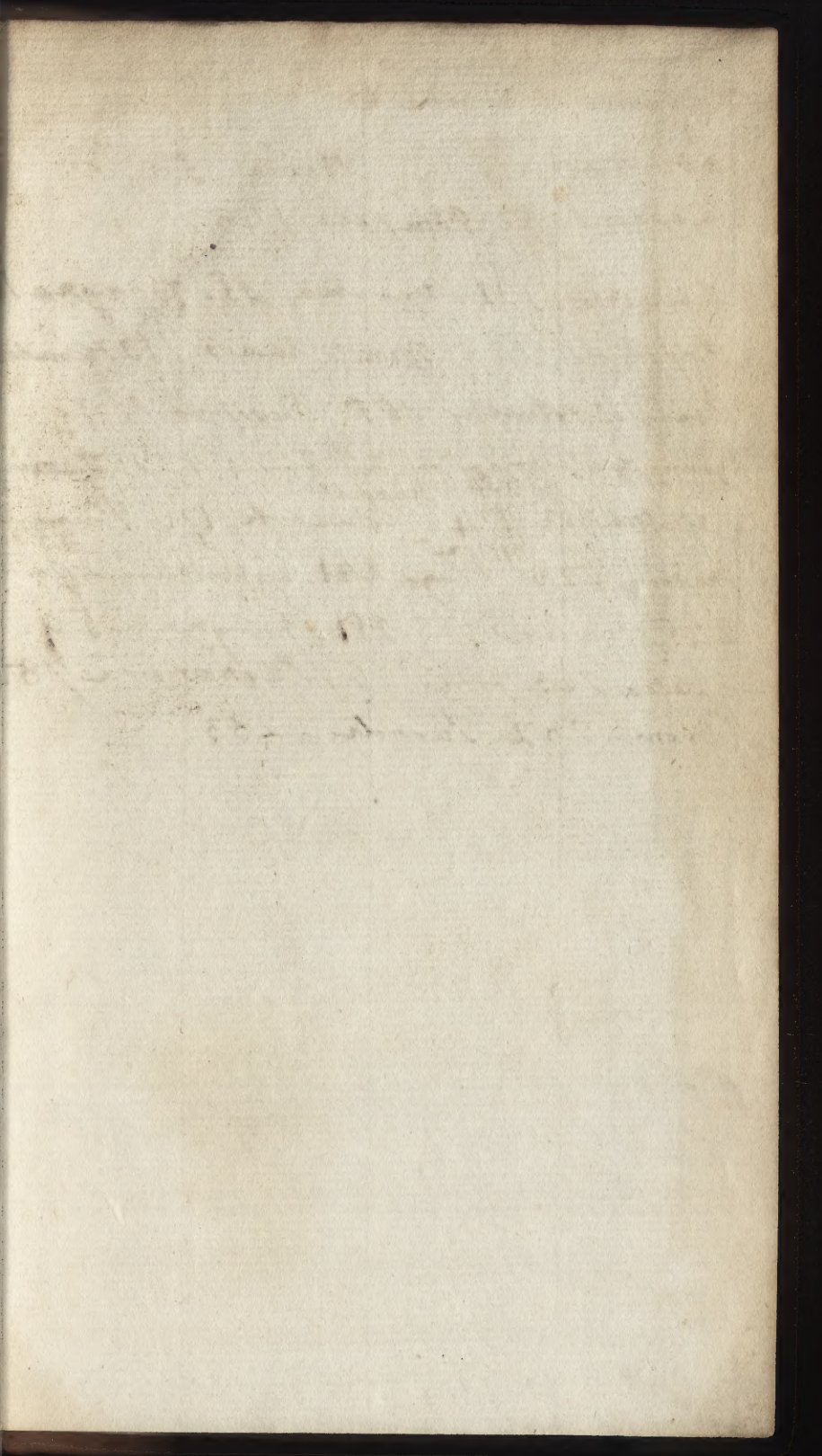
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What may have led Mr. Baretti into this oversight I cannot positively determine, but he has told us, that were Italians indulged with the liberty of the press, they would certainly make an illiberal use of it; and perhaps a fondness to support, at all events, that cruel charge against his countrymen, may have prompted him to give the world a pregnant example of the truth of it in his own writings.

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